REMARKS

The Office Action mailed February 27, 2006, has been carefully reviewed and by this Amendment, claims 1-10 have been canceled and claims 11-29 have been added. Accordingly, claims 11-29 are pending in the application. Claims 11 and 24 are independent.

The Examiner objected to the specification and abstract as containing informalities which Applicants have corrected herein. The text added to pages 1 and 2 corresponds with that of the previously referenced claims, and therefore does not constitute new matter.

The Examiner objected to claims 1-10 as containing informalities. By this Amendment, claims 1-10 have been canceled. In addition, the previous use of means plus function language in the canceled claims has been eliminated in the new claims. Favorable consideration and withdrawal of the objections is therefore requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,036,672 to Allen et al. ("Allen") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,484,425 to Fischell et al. ("Fischell").

Claims 1-10 having been canceled, the rejection is technically moot. However, with respect to new claims 11-29, Applicants provide the following remarks.

As set forth in new claim 11, the present invention is directed to a transcutaneous portal arrangement including a portal body having a recess delimited by a peripheral wall, and a bottom wall that includes a conically tapered through-passing opening which receives a catheter. Within the recess is a tubular element having a conically-tapered end-portion which is inserted into an end-portion of the catheter and connected thereto. Through this connection, the catheter can be drawn out of the user's body as the tubular element is withdrawn from the portal body.

The portal arrangement further includes a clamping structure that is configured to clamp the conically-tapered end-portion of the tubular element, to which the catheter end-portion is connected, thereto against the bottom wall around the conically tapered through-passing opening. The conical taper of the end-portion generally corresponds with the conical taper of the opening so that, with the action of the clamping structure, the catheter outer wall is clamped around the edge of the opening and the catheter inner wall is clamped around the periphery of the

end-portion of the tubular element. This is not shown or suggested by the prior art.

Allen reveals a channel 20 having a bowl-shaped rubber seal 22 with a stiff sleeve 28 having an inner thread fitted therein. A screw 38 is screwed into the sleeve 28 and expands the sleeve radially for clamping of the rim portion of the seal 22 around the circumference. The outer portion of the sleeve is unthreaded but nonetheless provides a certain radial clamping of the bowl-shaped seal 22 against the surrounding hole wall for sealing purposes. Hence, an elongate instrument can be inserted through the sleeve 28 and made to penetrate the bottom area of the seal 22 and extend into the instrument channel 20.

As correctly noted by the Examiner, there is no separate catheter in Allen. Hence, there is nothing in Allen to teach or suggest a portal device that clamps the conically expanded rim portion of a catheter hose between a conical bottom wall in the portal body and a corresponding conically tapered tubular element which fits into the catheter end, as set forth in claim 11.

Fischell discloses a bendable guide sleeve 10, 20 for a catheter hose. Fischell does not disclose or suggest the conically tapered components as set forth in claim 11 which provide an axial clamping force. Nor does Fischell suggest the anchoring of the

outer end of the catheter hose in the portal device that provides not only safe sealing and clamping of the catheter hose but also a safe withdrawal thereof by means of the tubular element.

For at least the foregoing reasons, new claim 11 is patentable over the prior art. Favorable consideration and allowance thereof is requested.

As further set forth in new independent claim 24, the present invention includes an elastomeric sealing element on top of the tubular element and covering the through-passing channel therein. The clamping structure is configured to press the sealing element against the tubular element when clamping the end-portion of the tubular element against the bottom wall around the through-passing opening. This positioning of a sealing element between the tubular element and the clamping structure, in addition to the other components in claim 24 already discussed in connection with claim 11, is not shown by the prior art.

Claims 12-23 and 25-28 are also in condition for allowance as claims properly dependent on an allowable base claim and for the subject matter contained therein.

More particularly, the prior art does not disclose a tubular element having a coupling part that can be coupled to a tool for withdrawal of the tubular element from the portal body

along with the catheter connected thereto, as set forth in claim 12, or that this coupling part includes an internal thread on the inside of the tubular element that coacts with the external thread on the tool as provided in claim 13. The prior art also does not disclose a clamping structure including a screw which is rotatable relative to the tubular element and which has an external screw thread which co-acts with an internal screw thread *on the peripheral wall of the recess*, as set forth in claim 14.

The screening of the through-passing channel in the tubular element by a sealing element that can be pierced by the cannula of an injection syringe and that is self-sealing subsequent to withdrawal of the cannula distinguishes claims 15 and 27 over the prior art, and the second sealing element of claims 18 and 28 is also not shown by the prior art.

Finally, the prior art does not suggest the portal arrangement of claims 22 and 29 in which the portal body is adapted for implantation in the body of the user.

With this amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned

attorney so that the present application can receive an early Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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